

true. This legislation strictly protects the exception for religious organizations that were first established in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This exemption allows religious organizations to maintain their character and mission by hiring staff that share their beliefs. That is all. That exemption continues. Organizations still must comply with all Federal laws regarding discrimination.

I would say Congress has passed four bills during my tenure here that President Clinton signed that have similar charitable choice provisions.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 seconds to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) on intervention.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to point out that any program that can get funded under H.R. 7 can be funded today. There is no discrimination against religious organizations. Many religious organizations get money today.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN).

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, President Bush has said we should fund the good work of the faithful but not the faith itself. I agree. Unfortunately, somewhere along the line the administration's proposal as reflected in the bill before us lost track of the goal of providing additional funds for faith and community groups to help needy families. Instead, the bill promotes government-funded religious discrimination, turning the President's campaign proposal on its head.

President Bush and the authors of H.R. 7 have continually failed to acknowledge that religious charities can and already do receive government funding to address poverty and other social problems. For example, Catholic Charities receives two-thirds of its budget from Federal, State and local government. The armies of compassion are already marching with the Federal government's thanks, blessing and money.

The bill before us does not provide a single dime in new money for these programs, no new resources for child care, social services, substance abuse treatment, housing or any other pressing need that the community and faith-based organizations are working to meet.

I asked the Committee on Rules to make an amendment in order that would have backed up our bold talk with badly-need funds. My amendment would have increased resources for the child care and the social services block grant, two programs that are underfunded and have a long and successful record of supporting faith-based organizations. Unfortunately, the Committee on Rules rejected my amendment along with a number of other amendments that would strengthen this bill.

Rather than providing real assistance to religious charities to serve needy families, the President's initiative fo-

cuses on allowing groups receiving government money to discriminate in their hiring practices. In fact, the proposal goes so far as to preempt State and local laws on prohibiting employment discrimination.

Proponents of the H.R. 7 have said they are simply continuing a current exemption to the Civil Rights Act, as the gentleman from Cincinnati (Mr. PORTMAN) just said, for the hiring practices of religious organizations.

This exemption is a common sense provision that ensures a synagogue is not required to hire a Catholic as a rabbi and a Christian church is not required to hire a Jew as a priest. However, the bill before us today is talking about something very different, allowing discrimination in secular jobs which are directly supported with government dollars. Such discrimination is not only wrong, it is unconstitutional.

In its decision on this specific issue, *Dodge v. Salvation Army*, a U.S. District Court ruled, and I quote, "The effect of government substantially, if not exclusively, funding a position and then allowing an organization to choose the person to fill or maintain that position based on religious preference clearly has the effect of advancing religion and is unconstitutional."

Mr. Speaker, there is no disagreement in this Chamber about the important role that religious charities play in addressing our Nation's problems. However, many of us are concerned about the proposal that it attempts to bypass constitutional protections while simultaneously failing to provide the necessary resources to achieve its stated purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the substitute that provides the protections and to reject the underlying bill.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DUNN).

Ms. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, Americans in communities across the country give their time, their talents and their money to help worthy causes. We have always been a generous people. DeTocqueville noted this in the mid-1800s when he spoke of the unique American tradition of volunteerism. No matter the social or economic burdens, the average American takes extraordinary actions to make a difference and to help those in need, not because they must but because they care.

H.R. 7 is a reflection of President Bush's vision to tap into the generosity of average Americans by expanding tax relief for charitable donations and by encouraging all organizations to participate in caring for those in need.

Currently, taxpayers who itemize their returns get to take a charitable deduction. Unfortunately, the Tax Code leaves out the nearly 70 percent of taxpayers who do not itemize. H.R. 7 eliminates that restriction. It puts a toe in the door. It rewards the tax-

payer's charitable choice and will lead to a corresponding boost in donations.

The bill also allows wealthy retired individuals to donate more money from their IRA without a tax penalty. Older people with means who want to help the community by donating to charity should be encouraged and not punished by the Tax Code.

Lastly, we should continue developing public-private partnerships between the government and charitable organizations.

Some critics claim that this is a dangerous blurring of politics and religion. With great respect, I disagree. I believe that by supporting this bill we honor our common commitment and belief in helping our fellow human beings.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in favor of the Democratic substitute.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Community Solutions Act, Democratic Substitute, as there are thousands of communities and millions of people in our country who have serious problems and are in need of real solutions.

I rise in support of this legislation, not because I believe that it is a panacea, I don't believe in one-stop cure-alls for the overwhelming magnitude of social, emotional, spiritual and economic ills which plague our society and are in need of every rational, logical, and proven approach that we can muster.

And yes, Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation because I have faith, faith in the ability of religious institutions to provide human services without proselytizing. I have faith in these institutions to organize themselves into corporate business entities to develop programs, to keep records, and to manage their affairs in compliance with legal requirements. I also have confidence in the ability of these institutions to magnify the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

I have listened intently to the issues raised by my colleagues who have expressed serious concerns about this legislation and I commend them for their diligence. I appreciate their concerns about charitable choice, ranging from discrimination to infringement on individual liberties.

However, charitable choice is already a part of three federal social programs: (1) The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, (2) The Community Services Block Grant Act of 1998, and is part of the 2000 Reauthorization of funding for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Each of these programs possess the overarching goal of helping those in poverty, or treating those suffering from chemical dependency, and the programs seem to achieve their purpose by providing resources in the most effective and efficient manner. The opponents of this legislation have expressed concern about the possible erosion of rights and protections of program participants and beneficiaries. (And rightly so, nothing could be more important). Therefore, I am pleased that